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GOVERNING COUNCIL

Organizational meeting for 1993

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 16 February 1993, at 10 a.m.

Temporary President: Mr. MAYORGA-CORTES (Nicaragua)

President: Mr. ADOUKI (Congo)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT declared open the organizational meeting of the Governing Council for 1993 and welcomed the newly elected members of the Council.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

2. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT invited the Council to elect a Bureau consisting of a President and four Vice-Presidents, due account being taken, in accordance with rule 11 of the rules of procedure, of the need to ensure equitable geographical representation.

3. According to the principle of geographical rotation of the office of President among the different regional groups, the President of the Governing Council for 1993 should be elected from among the members of the Group of African States. That Group had nominated Mr. Adouki (Congo) for the office of President.

4. Mr. Adouki (Congo) was elected President by acclamation.

5. Mr. Adouki (Congo) took the Chair.

6. The PRESIDENT said that while the majority of developing countries were experiencing a severe crisis and required assistance, the mobilization of resources was becoming an ever greater source of concern. Programme delivery, especially the delivery of regional programmes such as the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, was being compromised. At the same time, the United Nations system was undergoing profound change which, while difficult, need not be devastating. In that connection, the consultations concerning the Office for Project Services had been reassuring.

7. The following candidates had been nominated by their respective regional groups for election as Vice-Presidents of the Council: Mr. Serrate Cuellar (Bolivia) by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, Mr. Rade (Netherlands) by the Group of Western European and Other States, Mr. Rysinski (Poland) by the Group of Eastern European States and Mr. Ziaran (Islamic Republic of Iran) by the Group of Asian and Pacific States. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to elect by acclamation the four candidates he had named.

8. Mr. Serrate Cuellar (Bolivia), Mr. Rade (Netherlands), Mr. Rysinski (Poland) and Mr. Ziaran (Islamic Republic of Iran) were elected Vice-Presidents by acclamation.

9. The PRESIDENT suggested that Mr. Serrate Cuellar (Bolivia) should be designated Chairman of the Standing Committee for Programme Matters and that Mr. Rade (Netherlands) should be designated Chairman of the Budgetary and Finance Committee. The Chairman of the Drafting Group would be designated at a later date. He also suggested that Mr. Rysinski (Poland) and Mr. Ziaran (Islamic Republic of Iran) should assist him in conducting the proceedings of the Standing Committee for Programme Matters and the Drafting Group. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to approve those assignments.

10. It was so decided.

11. The PRESIDENT said that, in accordance with Governing Council decision 81/37, the Bureau and the Administrator were requested to hold consultations with Member States both before and during the sessions of the Council in order to facilitate the completion of the Council's work. He intended to make full use of such consultations.

STATEMENT BY THE ADMINISTRATOR

12. Mr. DRAPER (Administrator) said that in 1993 the Council, with the assistance of its Standing Committee for Programme Matters, would consider 19 country programmes, one programme extension and one set of projects to be managed on a case-by-case basis. A number of resident representatives would participate in the consideration of some of those country programmes. In addition, the Council would: consider requests for recipient status from seven newly independent States - Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Georgia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Tajikistan; review the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; discuss progress and developments with regard to the Global Environment Facility and Capacity 21; and consider a report on the establishment of a United Nations presence in the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States (DP/1993/5).

13. It was already clear that 1993 would be a critical year, not just for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), but for the United Nations as a whole. He had recently returned from a mission to Somalia and Mozambique, two countries which exemplified the new demands and challenges currently facing the Organization. In both countries, UNDP was working in close harmony with its partners, and UNDP personnel and infrastructure were being fully utilized.

14. Important initiatives had already been taken in the current year to restructure the economic and social sectors of the United Nations. For UNDP, one of the most significant developments was the Secretary-General's decision concerning the Office for Project Services. The Council had held preliminary informal consultations on the matter in January and had agreed that further consultations should take place in February and, if necessary, up to and during the regular session to be held in June. During the informal discussions, many delegations had emphasized that the implementation of the Secretary-General's decision would guarantee the ability of the Office to continue its outstanding performance, a point with which he strongly concurred.

(Mr. Draper, Administrator)

15. The Secretary-General's initiatives in the restructuring process also included the elimination of several senior-level posts; he would submit proposals to the Council in that connection in the context of the 1994-1995 budget estimates.

16. It appeared that estimated voluntary contributions for 1993 would fall below the $1 billion level for the first time in four years. While indicative planning figures (IPFs) for the fifth programming cycle (1992-1996) had been based on Governing Council decision 90/34, in which an annual growth rate of 8 per cent had been assumed, the actual rate of growth was significantly lower, having already slipped slightly below the target rate in 1992.

17. While the overall volume of programmes and rate of delivery were still growing as a result of increasing commitments to cost-sharing and other extrabudgetary resources, the ability of UNDP to meet targeted levels for planned and ongoing core programmes was being jeopardized by the low level of core resources. As a first step, he had asked resident representatives to ensure that programme commitments did not exceed 75 per cent of initial IPFs. Of course, the question of resources and IPF levels would be the subject of a mid-term review in 1994.

18. Although the economic and fiscal restraints faced by a number of donor countries were fully understandable, their impact on UNDP had been significantly aggravated by the depreciation of the currencies of a number of large donors vis-à-vis the United States dollar. Concerted efforts must be made to achieve the Council target if cut-backs in IPFs and programmes were to be avoided. The poorest countries, which received 87 per cent of national IPFs, would be the most seriously affected by such cut-backs. The efforts made by some countries to increase their contributions for 1993 should also be acknowledged. The United States of America and Austria had already increased their contributions by 17 per cent and 10 per cent respectively, while India had pledged an increase of 18 per cent over and above its increase of 40 per cent in 1992.

19. At the Council's previous session, he had expressed concern regarding the issue of governance and financing, which was still before the General Assembly, and support for the Nordic proposals in that area. He urged the Council to focus its attention on that issue during the next few weeks.

STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

20. Mrs. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that the Fund's income had totalled $237 million in 1992, which represented an increase of 6 per cent over its 1991 income. In 1993, despite an expected minimum contribution of $20 million from the United States of America, total income was projected at $238 million, or virtually the same as in 1992. Reductions of 78 per cent and 29 per cent in contributions from Finland and Sweden, together with losses from other donors resulting from exchange-rate fluctuations, accounted for the minimal growth.

(Mrs. Sadik)

21. The prospects for cooperation with the United States Government were improving. She had been invited to the White House by President Clinton on the occasion of the rescinding of the previous Administration's executive orders restricting contributions to various organizations. A range of possible contributions, from $20 million to $46 million, had been discussed with United States counterparts. While hoping for the higher level, UNFPA had decided to use the lower figure for budgetary purposes.

22. UNFPA would submit its budget estimates for 1994-1995 to the Council at its June 1993 session. The income for 1992-1993 had not met the projections. For the next biennium, efforts were being made to ensure the lowest possible ratio of administrative expenditures to total resources; accordingly, no staffing increases at headquarters had been proposed, and increases at the field level had been kept to a minimum. The Secretary-General had instructed UNFPA to eliminate one post at the Assistant Secretary-General level, namely, the post of Deputy Executive Director for Policy and Administration, which meant a reduction of 50 per cent in the Fund's senior management structure. The Secretary-General had also recommended commensurate reductions at the D-1 and D-2 levels; she would keep the Council informed of the action taken in that regard.

23. The preparatory work for the International Conference on Population and Development was proceeding smoothly. She expressed appreciation to the Governments of Finland and Canada, to UNDP and to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for their secondment of staff to the Conference secretariat. It would be necessary to mobilize additional resources to facilitate the participation of least developed countries in the preparatory process.

24. With regard to the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, UNFPA was engaged in several activities within the framework of Agenda 21 and was collaborating with other organizations of the United Nations system. It was also participating in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Inter-Agency Committee for Sustainable Development of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). She urged all countries to increase their contributions to UNFPA.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (DP/1993/1; DP/1993/L.1)

25. The agenda was adopted.

RATIONALIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL (DP/1993/2)

26. The PRESIDENT drew attention to General Assembly resolution 47/202, which invited the Governing Council to evaluate its meeting and documentation requirements with a view to rationalizing them. The Governing Council should also bear in mind the current discussions on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations.

27. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Governing Council), introducing document DP/1993/2, said that every effort had been made to prepare the provisional agendas for 1993 in accordance with Governing Council decision 92/2, relating to the rationalization of the work of the Council. Pursuant to that decision, the Council was to review additional possibilities for the rationalization of its work, including its meeting and documentation requirements. In that connection, the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences had recommended that meetings should begin promptly and that quorum requirements should be waived. In addition, the secretariat had proposed that the fortieth session should end on 18 June rather than 22 June 1993.

28. Bearing in mind that the General Assembly was currently discussing the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields and that the Governing Council had taken a major step forward with the adoption of decision 92/2, no new major initiative to streamline the work of the Governing Council would be proposed until the conclusion of the ongoing reform effort. However, the secretariat was continuing its efforts to implement previous decisions. In that connection, it should be noted that the overall number and volume of reports had been significantly reduced.

29. Mr. MACHIN (United Kingdom) welcomed the changes made in order to rationalize the Governing Council's work but expressed disappointment that no new major initiative to streamline the work of the Council would be proposed until the conclusion of the ongoing United Nations reform effort. It was obvious that reform of the United Nations would last for a considerable time and that further reform efforts would be required. It was therefore disappointing that UNDP was not tackling major areas.

30. Rationalization was an important issue, and Governing Council decision 92/2 was simply a stepping stone. More efforts were needed to streamline and dovetail activities. The Council should consider the need for a follow-up decision in 1993.

31. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said that in 1993 the Governing Council would have a shorter session than usual in which to consider very important issues, including budgetary matters. It might be necessary to hold night meetings.

32. Turning to the items and reports which the Council would consider, he suggested that the title of the item on environment and development should be changed to reflect the increasing importance of sustainable development. With regard to the Human Development Report, he trusted that the Council would retain the question on the agenda of future sessions, since document DP/1993/2 listed it for 1992 only. Lastly, he asked whether UNFPA could provide a list of documents to assist the Governing Council.

33. Mrs. SCHÄFER-PREUSS (Germany) endorsed the remarks made by the representatives of the United Kingdom and Switzerland. The Governing Council needed a follow-up decision on rationalization, since important items remained

(Mrs. Schäfer-Preuss, Germany)

unresolved, including the question of the Human Development Report and the biennialization of activities. Moreover, the Council would have to consider many important issues in what would be a curtailed session. The time allocated to UNFPA in particular was rather short.

34. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Governing Council) said that his observation that no new initiatives would be taken to streamline the work of the Governing Council had been made in the expectation that the General Assembly would soon adopt a further decision on the matter. It might therefore be preferable to discuss the issue in informal consultations.

35. Regarding the length of the 1993 session, the Council would have before it fewer country programmes and, if anything, should have more time than usual for consideration of other issues. It should be possible to conclude the Council's work without the holding of night meetings. The Council would note that the Commission on Sustainable Development was due to meet in June, and that the timetable suggested would limit the overlap between the two bodies to just one week.

36. Regarding the suggestion that the title of the item relating to environment and development should be changed, the Council could decide to do that when it took the item up. With respect to the Human Development Report, which was listed in document DP/1993/2 as being under consideration in 1992 only, the Administrator would include appropriate information in his annual report pursuant to Governing Council decision 92/2. Lastly, the question of further biennialization could be considered if time was available.

37. Mrs. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) noted that the Governing Council would devote one and a half days in plenary meeting to UNFPA and that one day would be available for UNFPA budgetary matters. It might be possible to circulate an informal annotated agenda and list of documents for UNFPA.

38. Mr. SHOJI (Japan) said that informal consultations had been of great value to member States at previous sessions of the Governing Council, and full use of that mechanism should be made at the current session. Further, every effort should be made to make documentation available to delegations in good time.

MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL IN 1993 (DP/1993/L.1 and L.2)

Provisional agenda and organization of work of the special session

39. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Governing Council) drew attention to document DP/1993/L.1, containing the provisional agenda, annotations, a list of documents and the schedule of work for the special session. Certain items of the provisional agenda, such as those on environment and development and

(Mr. Graisse)

activities of UNDP in the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States, were to be considered pursuant to decisions taken at previous sessions of the Governing Council. The Council also had before it requests for recipient status from five countries and from two new Member States, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

40. Under the item entitled "Programme planning and implementation", the Council would have before it 19 country programmes for approval, one extension and a note concerning approval of projects in Somalia on a case-by-case basis. The Administrator would report to the Standing Committee on Programme Matters on his visits to Somalia and Mozambique.

41. In order to provide enough time for consideration of country programmes, the Standing Committee for Programme Matters would meet at the same time as the Council in plenary meeting. The Council would also consider the items entitled "Tentative timetable for mid-term reviews 1993-1995" and "Administrative authority to approve preparatory assistance to global projects". The Industrial Development Board of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), in its decision IDB.10/Dec.11 of 6 November 1992, had invited the Governing Council at its special session to consider the item "Sectoral support programme, UNIDO country director".

42. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) inquired whether informal meetings with resident representatives and coordinators had been planned.

43. Mr. MOHAMED (Sudan) asked whether the country programme for the Sudan would be considered at the special session.

44. Mr. AYALA LASSO (Ecuador) wondered whether any representatives of UNIDO would be present during the discussion of the related item.

45. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Governing Council) said that some UNDP resident representatives were attending the session in order to present country programmes, and it would be possible to organize meetings with them. The country programme for the Sudan was included in the list for consideration at the fortieth session. A representative of UNIDO would be present during the discussion of the relevant item.

46. The PRESIDENT said he would take it that the Council wished to approve the provisional agenda and the arrangements for the special session, contained in chapter III of document DP/1993/L.1, and the timetable contained in its annex.

47. It was so decided.

Provisional agenda and organization of work for the fortieth session

48. The PRESIDENT noted that the programme of work for the fortieth session of the Governing Council contained a proposal to end the session on Friday, 18 June 1993, rather than on 22 June, as currently scheduled. It was his hope that, with the cooperation of all participants, the Council could expedite its work and complete it in three weeks rather than the traditional four.

49. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Governing Council) drew attention to the provisional agenda and schedule of work for the fortieth session contained in document DP/1993/L.2. With regard to the tentative schedule of work, contained in annex II of that document, closure of the session was scheduled for Friday, 18 June 1993. In accordance with past practice, the Executive Director of UNFPA would introduce her annual report on the first day of the session and the Administrator would introduce his annual report at the end of the first week. There would be no high-level segment, but the debate on the annual report of the Administrator and programme-level activities would offer an opportunity for statements of a broader scope.

50. It had been suggested that consideration of the sub-item on the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) should be postponed from 7 June until 15 June, in order to allow experts to participate in the Ninth International Conference on AIDS, scheduled for 7-11 June.

51. Approximately half as many country programmes would be submitted to the Governing Council for approval as in 1992. UNFPA had estimated that it would submit 15 country programmes, while UNDP had estimated 30. The Council might wish to entrust the Bureau with the task of adjusting the schedule of meetings to ensure the smooth conduct of the session and was invited, as in previous years, to waive the 10-week rule for submission of documents to the Office of Conference Services for processing.

52. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) noted that the report of the Administrator was intended to cover six topics and that the tentative schedule of work included a proposal to discuss four other items within two days. There was a tendency to include an increasing number of issues in the general discussion, which would not provide enough time for comment in depth. He would prefer to discuss the topics covered by the report of the Administrator and their relevant documentation separately. The discussion of national capacity-building scheduled for 14 and 15 June was likely to involve a number of separate documents, which should also be discussed individually, beginning with the topic of comparative advantage.

53. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Governing Council) said that each topic covered in the annual report of the Administrator that was to be discussed on 14 and 15 June would indeed be considered separately.

54. Mr. MONROE (United States of America) said that the question of organizational change in respect of the Office of Project Services should be

(Mr. Monroe, United States)

discussed informally, but should also be included in the agenda of the fortieth session. He hoped that note a/ (iii) in document DP/1993/L.2 referred to General Assembly resolution 47/100 and the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control. Finally, the Standing Committee on Programme Matters must be reinforced, and topics such as national execution, agency support costs and national capacity-building should be included in the agenda for the session, since they were long-term programme issues.

55. Mr. NISSEN (Norway) associated himself with the proposal to discuss changes in the secretariat, especially the Office of Project Services, at the regular session.

56. Mr. SHOJI (Japan) agreed with the representative of the United States of America that the Council should look into the Office of Project Services. In accordance with paragraph 3 of Governing Council decision 92/34, the Administrator should provide Member States with full particulars of the reorganization of the Office, including its functions, responsibilities and working methods. The Administrator might also arrange informal consultations with a representative of the Secretary-General before the opening of the session in order to provide Member States with an update of the situation. The Council's deliberations on the reorganization of the Office ought to produce guidelines with regard to its future status and work.

57. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation) agreed with the representatives of the United States of America and Japan that an official discussion of the reorganization of the Office of Project Services during the fortieth session would be useful.

58. Mr. LUNDBORG (Sweden) supported the United States proposal to discuss the effects of the restructuring of the Office of Project Services and the suggestion that the System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control should be integrated into the work of the Council.

59. Mr. MACHIN (United Kingdom) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the proposals made by the United States representative. It was also ready to waive the 10-week rule regarding documentation, while urging that every effort should be made to speed up distribution. He wondered whether the Standing Committee on Programme Matters would meet during the inter-sessional period.

60. Mr. GRAISSE (Secretary of the Governing Council) said that he had taken note of the proposals made and would consider how they might be implemented. There were no current plans for an inter-sessional meeting of the Standing Committee on Programme Matters. Such a meeting, although expensive, was nevertheless feasible.

61. Mr. CLAVIJO (Observer for Colombia) said it was important for the Council to consider the System-Wide Action Plan for Drug Abuse Control. He also believed that national execution and agency support costs should be considered in plenary meetings as well as in the Standing Committee on Programme Matters so that all delegations could participate.

62. The PRESIDENT said that, bearing in mind the views put forward by various delegations, he would ask the secretariat to prepare and submit to the Council a revised draft provisional agenda and timetable for its consideration.

63. If he heard no objection, he would take it that, for the special session, the Council wished to waive rule 22 of its rules of procedure in so far as it referred to the requirement that a quorum of one third of all Council members should be present before a meeting could be opened.

64. It was so decided.

65. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to allocate to the Budgetary and Finance Committee the items listed in paragraph 8 of document DP/1993/L.2.

66. It was so decided.

67. The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to reaffirm the principles guiding the work of the Drafting Group as contained in section III of Governing Council decision 83/1 and recalled in paragraphs 9 and 10 of document DP/1993/L.2.

68. It was so decided.

69. The PRESIDENT said that, in the light of the explanations presented in paragraph 11 of document DP/1993/L.2, he would take it that the Council wished to waive the 10-week rule for the documents listed in paragraph 12.

70. It was so decided.

OTHER MATTERS

71. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said that the collection of major Governing Council and policy documents which had been provided to members at the previous session had been very useful and should again be provided at the forthcoming session.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.